

Climate Change Solutions Fund GRANT GUIDELINES

Grant Background

The Climate Change Solutions Fund was launched in the fall of 2014 to expand the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation's current efforts in its Art + Environment program, which to date have focused on artist-led projects to deepen public awareness of climate change. The Fund broadens this strategy to equally foreground the work of organizations tackling the root causes of global warming in ways that both engage a broad public and recognize the catalytic roles culture and creativity can play in these endeavors.

The climate crisis is as much one of culture and imagination as it is one of energy, science, or economy. Facts are facts. Global warming is real, and it is here. It is not a distant threat 10 or 15 years away but very much a part of our everyday lives – from a higher grocery bill to a rise in catastrophic natural disasters.

To some, the role of arts, culture, and creativity may seem frivolous in this context. However, our proposition is that a problem this massive and urgent requires experts in creative problem solving, a skill that is a prerequisite for outstanding artists. There is a missed opportunity to engage artists as critical minds and collaborators in the process of devising policy recommendations and brainstorming tactics for mobilizing the masses. Artists can bring the urgency of climate change into the forefront of our consciousness, just as they have with so many other issues from famine to AIDS to civil rights and more.

Indeed, climate change is the most urgent global crisis of our time. But citing scientific data and pushing gloom and doom messages of Armageddon has only taken us so far. The foundation recognizes that solutions to rebalance our unstable ecosystems must be both tactical and strategic. Positive change will require new technologies and improved policies to regulate cleaner business practices, and it will also demand radical shifts in the belief systems underlying a global economy built on exploitation of labor and natural resources.

This open call invites proposals from organizations (of all stripes) that have a generative vision of what we should be fighting for not just against. What might it look like to cultivate physical and social environments through which we can equitably and sustainably steward the resources that support our lives on this planet? Because to be clear, the planet isn't going anywhere. It is human beings who stand to perish.



Grant Amount and Purpose

Applicants may request \$25,000 to \$150,000 over one or two years. The project budget can also include up to 15% in overhead costs.

The purpose of the grant is to provide resources for organizations working to either mitigate the causes of climate change or adapt to the new physical and social environments it generates. More specifically, the foundation is interested in mitigation and adaptation projects that combine climate-related work with civic engagement and culture.

Fundamentally, the premise of this fund is that in order for humanity to continue to be sustained by the natural resources of this planet, massive shifts need to occur not only in our energy sources and consumption patterns, but also in the set of values, beliefs, and behaviors which have produced unsustainable economies of exploitation.

In that frame, we believe mitigation and adaptation efforts are equally necessary. We are less concerned with whether a project is focused on climate mitigation or adaption (i.e. the WHAT) as much as we are concerned with the approach a project takes (i.e. the HOW) such that it improves that strategy's efficacy.

Eligibility

- Organizations working in the realm of environmental science, policy, advocacy, justice, or other climate-related fields can seek support for projects that in some way employ civic engagement, culture, and creativity to strengthen the effectiveness of their campaigns and strategies.
- Similarly, arts organizations that are partnering with scientists or climate facing organizations to effect change in this arena are also eligible to seek support.
- Applicants must either be 501(c)3 or be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)3.
- Each applicant can submit only one proposal.
- Requests are for project support, not general support. However, projects can be at any stage of development—from early R&D to long-standing work.
- The following types of projects will not be considered for funding:
 - Capital or endowment campaigns
 - Scholarships or fellowships for individuals
 - Academic research

- We encourage applications from organizations/efforts led by and based in communities of color, low-income communities, and other communities on the front lines of climate change.

Selection Criteria

- Project identifies a significant climate-related problem or opportunity and uses strategies that reflect sound root cause analysis, in terms of both climate science and social science.
- Project is feasible in the timeline proposed and has clear indicators of success that the applicant is able to track.
- Project's goals and/or strategies align with the Fund's grantmaking priorities (see *Characteristics of Successful Applicants*)
- Organization has a demonstrated capacity to carry out the proposed project. Capacity is likely evidenced by the expertise of the project's leadership, the degree to which any requisite partnerships have been established well, the organization's fiscal health, and the capacity of staff to focus on this project.
- Organization has a track record of existing gains through the proposed project and/or success in coordinating or executing the kind of work it proposes.

Characteristics of Successful Applicants

We are particularly interested in:

- Ecological approaches—i.e. projects that do more than take the natural environment into consideration, but instead consider the interconnected systems of the physical environment, local and global economies, culture, and policy.
- Efforts that recognize the roles location and culture can play in effectively addressing climate change, especially in instances where proposed projects are rooted in specific places/localities (e.g., the specific civic engagement tactics employed in Brooklyn, NY may not be useful in Ardmore, OK).
- Efforts that engage the expertise or are led by those who are earliest and most threatened by the changing climate. Most often these are communities that already face structural marginalization, such as people living on low incomes, immigrant communities, and communities of color.
- Work to build a more unified climate movement by strengthening coalitions, bridging cultures among potential allies, forming unlikely alliances, etc.



- Work that actively engages and/or mobilizes a broad public.
- Visionary thinking; projects that reflect or move us towards a new way of being rather than mending our current systems. Projects that envision a new world along with concrete strategies for how to get there will be highly favored.

Grant Reporting Requirements

Specific reporting requirements will be provided within the grant contract, however it should be expected that grantees will be asked to report on the ways in which they spent foundation dollars. While eligible expenses are broad, they must be consistent with the budget put forward in the full proposal. Additionally, grantees will be asked to report on what they accomplished through the grant.